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DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT
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Families,

As you may know, the Governor previously ordered that all Virginia Schools are to remain closed for the remainder of the academic year. The Governor just announced today a “stay at home” Order. [Governor's Order 3/30/2020](#)

Over the past couple of weeks as our community and schools have realized the pressures of the current pandemic, I have seen countless school employees put aside their own concerns and focus on the needs of students and families first. They are among the many true heroes of these times. Food service workers, bus drivers, custodians, technology staff, teachers, coaches, professionals, administrators and many other employees have come together as a community to join and support families in ensuring that students remain safe and continue to succeed in these challenging times. Our Food Service staff has been most impressive during this time. They have been the ones to let our students and families know through day-to-day interaction, that our schools are a place to connect with other compassionate people in this time of uncertainty. I have seen joy on the faces of the school staff who are led by a sense of purpose and the knowledge that they continue to make a difference in the lives of our students.

Educators, with little notice, have used their own creative spirit to redesign what teaching and learning looks like in this new environment, literally over a matter of days. Currently, the leadership and planning team are developing the transition plan for Phase II: Continuity of Learning plan for students and families. We are working to ensure that we provide students with special needs the support they need, even though this may look different than before. Our expectation is that ALL students will be able to stay connected to their classroom and their teachers through the use of technology, virtual learning, Google Classroom, learning packets, and phone communication. Phase II Learning Modules for **grades pre-k - 12** will be made available the **week of April 13, 2020**. You will be hearing from your teachers in the near future.

This transition is not only important for the continuity of learning, but also for social and emotional support, as we strive to provide a sense of connection. We anxiously await the time for when we can bring educational normalcy back to students and families. The form of education may change rapidly over the next several months; however, the need to provide a positive educational experience for our students, within these constraints, remains constant. Everyone in our city should feel proud of the prioritization of essential services to our children during this pandemic. This will truly define us as a community. Blessings to our law enforcement, emergency response teams, healthcare professionals, grocery workers, gas station attendants, truckers and so many others that continue to make it possible for us to operate remotely. I am hopeful that, while our community is temporarily isolated physically, we look for ways to come together emotionally and spiritually and uplift one another. My hope is that our community gets behind our commitment and shared efforts to make sure our students continue to feel safe, continue to learn in new ways, and thrive.

Please take this time to reflect and unite together to help our community rise above the fear and despair of this time. Education has always been a valued asset to many during troubled times and it is our hope that we continue to be here to meet the needs of many. I continue to sincerely thank the educational community, families and students, who are committed to one another. We will rise above this situation as we endeavor to be resourceful, have courage, and strength in character. I know because I have already witnessed this in the last couple of weeks.

Please reach out to us if you have questions or need assistance at (276) 807-8571 during this time. Please consider using email as your best option for the quickest response and to determine availability as daily schedules of our offices may be limited or altered.

REMAIN RAIDER STRONG!

Sincerely,

Dr. Gina Wohlford

SOL TESTING

The United States Department of Education has given flexibility to Virginia, through the application for a waiver in regards to the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. The Virginia Board of Education will take action to submit the waiver at their next meeting. In addition, the General Assembly will need to approve flexibility in the administration of SOL tests for those tests we administer above what is required by the United States Department of Education. We FULLY expect for the SOL testing requirement to be waived for this academic year.

PROM AND GRADUATION

At this time, Norton City Schools has not cancelled prom or graduation ceremonies for the 2019-20 school year. Due to the previous Order from the Governor, and his most recent order as of today, there are many restrictions that make these events impossible to have as scheduled. We are still hopeful that we will be able to reschedule these events, but we cannot determine a date until the Governor's Orders are lifted. Please understand we will make every effort to afford these milestones for our students, but we have many constraints at the present time.

ATHLETICS

The VHSL Crisis Management Team voted to delay spring sports and academic activities until May, 2020 and will require that the threat of COVID-19 poses NO health risks to our student athletes in order to resume.

FOOD SERVICE

Norton City Schools will continue to offer meals for our students through means of pick-up and bus delivery on routes.